

## **RE: Restrictions on cell phones and personal internet-connected devices**

Dear Parents,

On January 26th, 2024, the Province [announced three actions](#) for the safety and well-being of students in relation to digital technology. The announcement included restrictions on the use of cell phones in schools, which must be in place for the 2024-25 school year.

Research has shown that frequent cell phone interruptions in the classroom (especially social media notifications), along with the addictive nature of social media platforms and the rise of cyberbullying, are having a negative impact on the learning environment and on the well-being of students.

In most cases, the use of these personal devices during instructional time is already restricted in SD52. However, there will now be a consistent application of these restrictions as mandated by the Province and by SD52 Board of Education (Policy 1390 which is out for review and will be approved at the next board meeting - see attached). The exception to these restrictions will be for students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a medical or health issue that specifically outlines the need for these devices for full inclusion in specific learning activities.

Students in SD52 currently have access to school/district-owned technology at an age-appropriate level that supports learning. We will continue to leverage this technology to enhance learning opportunities, build digital technology skills and develop good digital citizenship.

***Effective September 1st, 2024, students will be expected to adhere to the following minimum restrictions on the use of personal internet-connected devices:***

**Elementary:** No access to or use of such devices at any time during the school day. This is essentially a “bell-to-bell” restriction from the beginning of school to the end of the day. Parents are reminded that elementary students are always under direct supervision and that the school will communicate with home for any emergent need that arises.

**Middle and Secondary:** Access to, and the use of personal internet-connected devices at the middle and secondary levels will not be permitted during instructional time. At the teacher’s discretion, an exemption may be made when the use of such

devices supports a specific curricular objective and is part of instructional planning. Prince Rupert Middle School may also implement a bell to bell restriction.

### **Security & Storage:**

It is important to note that security and storage of personal internet-connected devices is the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The District assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of such devices. If students must bring a device to school, they are encouraged to ensure they are locked away in lockers (middle/secondary) or kept in a secure location (elementary).

### **Definition**

*“Personal Internet-Connected Devices” include, but are not limited to, cell phones, tablet computers, smartwatches, and portable video game systems.*